

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1970)
Heft: 1595

Artikel: Hard luck, Peter Bonetti
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-688567>

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THE CHURCH OF GENEVA HAS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Although it cannot be said that the churches of Geneva are in a financial crisis, their livelihood has been diminishing lately. This is due to the fact that, in the face of constantly rising prices, the income from the "ecclesiastical contributions" has remained stagnant. Geneva hasn't got the ordinary ecclesiastical tax because its churches have been separated from the State for the past 25 years. They live on the generosity of their members and on free contributions levied with the income tax of voluntary contributors. For those who are willing to pay their ecclesiastical contribution, it amounts to 16 per cent of income tax and 6 per cent of wealth tax. The list and denomination of contributors are submitted to the three recognised churches entitled to their proceeds every year: the Protestant, the Roman Catholic and the Old Catholic Churches. If the list contained every tax payer, then the Protestant Church of Geneva would be getting 13 million francs a year and the Catholic Church about 8 million. They get in fact 4.3 million and 2 million respectively, which shows that only 35 per cent of tax payers are willing to donate ecclesiastical contributions. The Consistoire of the Protestant Church of Geneva has recently revealed the 1970 budget. It is of 6 million francs—one million more than last year and will only be balanced (other sources of revenue taken into account) if the income from ecclesiastical contributions rises to 5.5 million francs. The pay of pastors and other servants of the Church has had to be increased recently to keep pace with the increased cost of living. Let's hope that the generosity of the faithful will not lag behind this universal economic phenomenon!

THE "TRAM DEMONSTRATORS" SENTENCED

At the end of last year Basle students staged a demonstration against the increased prices of the city's trams. More than that, they claimed free journeys for students. Two of their leaders have just been sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment for breaking the peace and disorderly conduct. The two accused refused to consider themselves as "leaders", maintaining that the demonstration had been entirely spontaneous. Demonstrations were not forbidden in Switzerland, said the Magistrate. They could even be organised without a special police authorisation. It was just a question of disrupting the orderly life of the public. The demonstration, which had culminated in a "sit-in" halting traffic and trams, exceeded the bounds of what the law could tolerate.

THE NEW AIR SUPPORT FIGHTER

Some seven months ago we wrote of the difficulties in choosing a new air support plane to succeed the old *Venoms* of the Swiss Air Force. The choice has apparently not yet been made and

the Air Force is still hesitating between the French *Milan S*, the American *Corsair II A 7D* and the Italian *Fiat G 91 Y*. The Anglo-French Jaguar is never talked about anymore and the possibility of its being chosen must presumably be ruled out.

When the problem of a replacement aircraft made the headlines last Autumn, the *Fiat* and the *Corsair* stood in a better position than all the other candidates (there were seven of them). Now it seems that the cheaper but more lightly equipped and less sophisticated *Fiat* has given way to the *Corsair*. As the *Milan S*, an improved version of the *Mirage 5* (currently embargoed from Israel) is once again in the forefront, the final lap will be fought between the *Corsair* and the *Milan*.

The *Corsair* can carry a heavier load of bombs and rockets but is subsonic. The *Milan* on the other hand is supersonic, but its increased speed is achieved at the cost of payload and armament. The Air Force wanted a subsonic aircraft from the outset. There is a great difference in design and designation between an interceptor, which chases other aircraft and flies at supersonic speeds, and a ground support fighter, whose task is to support combat troops on the ground and which does not need to fly faster than sound to do so.

A supersonic machine like the *Milan* has the advantage of escaping from enemy interceptors. Its afterburner can give it a tremendous burst of power thanks to which it can behave, if need be, as an interceptor fighter. The official policy has so far been to separate the role of interception and ground support: the 57 "Mirages 3S" can be entrusted with the first and a subsonic machine can support troops on the ground provided that it is protected from faster aircraft by the *Mirages*. There have however been very strong pressures within Air Force circles to adopt the *Milan* definitely. It is felt that the Swiss Air Force will dispose of so few ground support machines that it is best to make them the least vulnerable and still compatible with their purpose. A slow moving air support aircraft, however perfected and sophisticated, will have less chance of survival than an agile supersonic fighter. There is also a strong attachment for Dassault aircraft. Their qualities have been amply demonstrated and our air defence has now relied on them for the past ten years. Besides, the *Milan* has peculiar little fins which jut out of the fuselage and which retract at supersonic speeds. This is an invention shared by the aeronautical workshops of Emmen and the Dassault Company. These firms have the property of making the aircraft both more manoeuvrable and stable in subsonic flight.

It must be pointed out however that the two aircraft which were officially retained by the Federal Council were the *Fiat* and the *Corsair*. The

Milan is very much talked about only because it is a well known and favoured machine among military circles. No word has officially been uttered that could make one say that the Government had opted for the *Milan*—the plane just remains a strong potential candidate.

The head of the Military Department, Mr. Gnägi, brought up the problem again at a recent gathering of the Association of Officers. From his address it could be concluded that the experts had definitely favoured the *Corsair* with respect to the *Fiat*, but that both its cost and maintenance by far exceeded the credit of 1,300 million francs allocated for the new aircraft in 1967. The decision has therefore not been taken yet. The Air Force badly needs a new ground support aircraft to replace its 20-year-old *Venoms*. A group of experts have studied the comparative values of the *Corsair* and the *Fiat*, making full use of computers and modern analytical methods for the past two years, and have still not made up their minds.

HARD LUCK, PETER BONETTI

You may have remained totally disinterested in the World Cup and deliberately plugged your ears in front of the hullabaloo that was staged over and around it, you can hardly have ignored that England lost to West Germany in the quarter-finals. What a tragedy for England, the former Cup-holders! As England's number one goalkeeper, Gordon Banks, had fallen ill on the night before (and, incidentally, the day after having been awarded an OBE) it was for his substitute, Peter Bonetti, to defend England's colours in the blistering mid-day heat of the Mexican town of Leon on that fateful Sunday. Peter Bonetti is a Swiss-British double national and his parents come from Ticino. We interviewed him in the April 24th issue of the *Swiss Observer*. Alas, he let three goals slip in on that fateful match against the West Germans. Goalkeepers are in a very vulnerable position as they tend to get all the blame for the goals which they concede, even though these goals may be the result of a weak and uncoordinated defence. Nobody has in fact blamed Peter Bonetti alone for what happened, but all football commentators agree that he was not in his best shape. Had he played as well as on that glorious Cup Final against Leeds, he may well have stopped one or two of the three goals which England allowed. Bonetti probably knows this as well as anybody else and this must have made his moral agony all the worse at the end of the game. It must be hard for a world class 'keeper who had given only one goal in the six victorious international games of his career to let three in the match which counted the most!